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REPORT

CD NO.

DATE OF INFORMATION 1950

DATE DIST. 3 Nov 1950

NO. OF PAGES 3

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

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SOURCE            Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR, No 6, 1950, pp 99-101.

ACADEMICIAN LEONID IVANOVICH PRASOLOV

The Scientific Council of the Soils Institute imeni V. V. Dokuchayev, Academy of Sciences USSR, recently convened a jubilee session to commemorate the 75th birthday of Academician Leonid Ivanovich Prasolov.

The opening address was delivered by I. V. Tyurin, Corresponding Member, Academy of Sciences, who recounted the life and activity of Academician L. I. Prasolov, one of the foremost Soviet soil scientists. More laurels were heaped on Prasolov in laudatory speeches by I. P. Gerasimov, Corresponding Member, Academy of Sciences, "Work of Academician L. I. Prasolov on Mapping the Soils of the Earth and the Significance of This Work," N. N. Rozov, "Composite Soil Maps of the European Part of the USSR and Their Significance in the Development of Soil Geography," S. P. Yarkov, "New Student's Edition of a Soil Map of the USSR for Higher Technical Schools," and B. F. Petrov, Ye. V. Lobova, and A. A. Yerokhina, "New Soil Map of Asia."

L. I. Prasolov completed the course of studies at the Petersburg University in 1898. Upon graduation he became interested in the work of V. V. Dokuchayev and decided to specialize in the relatively new field of soil studies.

From the very beginning, the Prasilov's works have been so advanced that in his first studies in the Samarskiy district (gubernik), he was able to compile a first-class soil-geographical description of the surrounding territory. The excellence of this work was in no way over-shadowed by work which he accomplished in later years.

Works in the Northern Caucasus permitted Prasolov to make some important generalizations with regard to the genesis of and regularities in the geographical distribution of soils. One of his theories, i.e., the hypothesis of the existence of soil provinces, was of great importance for future research in soil geography.

Soon after the Great October Revolution, L. I. Prasolov collected much valuable data from soil photographs of USSR territories. The results of this tedious and time-consuming work were first published in 1922 in the work "Soil Regions of European USSR", and later in 1927 in "Soil Map of the Asiatic USSR." This map was

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drawn up with the assistance of Academicians K. D. Glinka, S. S. Neustruyev, B. B. Polynov and N. I. Prokhorov. In 1930 Prasolov published a "Soil Map for the European USSR" (1:2, 500,000).

In the meantime, Prasolov was continuing work which he started in 1906 to establish sufficient data for the compilation of a multisheet soil map of the USSR (1:1,000,000). During his research for this monumental work, Prasolov developed several new ideas in the field of mapping soils which have been used to great advantage by his followers and other soil scientists as well as USSR cartographers. Academician V. R. Vil'yams praised Prasolov's work highly and attributed much progress in agriculture to his work on mapping the soils of the USSR.

Prasolov has also gained fame for his work on the classification, systematics, and nomenclature of soils, as well as for the development of a method for estimating the soil resources of the USSR. For his work on soil cartography and the method developed for estimating the USSR soil resources, he was awarded a Stalin Prize in 1942, and in 1947 he was awarded the Gold Medal imeni V. V. Dokuchayev for his work entitled "A World Soil Map."

In compiling the various soil maps, Prasolov made use of much material obtained through personal research as well as data in over 500 foreign works.

The "World Soil Map" shows that Soviet scientists have developed a method which will permit classification of a large mass of material obtained from world-wide empirical studies on the nature of the earth's crust.

Prasolov's soil maps made it possible to determine the main soil types for the earth's entire dry land surface, as well as to conduct studies to determine soil types for individual continents and countries. He published data from these maps in the form of comprehensive tables in 1945. Later (1946 to 1947) Prasolov and N. N. Rozov published new data which characterized world agriculture on the basis of soil types. This was the first attempt in world literature to show on a world-wide basis the use which was being made of the various natural soil types. It was established that only a portion of the arable lands are being utilized for agriculture. It was possible to estimate the number of major soil types under cultivation and to draw up comprehensive picture of the available agricultural resources of various countries.

Academician L. I. Prasolov's world soil map and data on world soil resources expose the fallacies of the neo-Malthusian "theory" which today is being adopted for military purposes by the imperialistic countries. Their administrative cliques are undertaking policies of aggression under the guise of resettlement of the peoples of the earth to make allowance for the lack of sufficient land to satisfy some peoples' agricultural needs. The American pseudoscientist, William Vogt, in his book The Road to Survival (1948) estimates that there is 0.4 hectares of arable land per every person in the world, which in Vogt's estimation is too little to maintain the standard of living of the peoples of the world. Even casual examination of Prasolov's world soil map reveals the fallacies of Vogt's estimates. According to Prasolov, there are more than 8 billion hectares (20 billion acres) of arable land in the world, and much of this land has not been subjected to thorough agricultural or soil conservation methods. This fault is particularly noticeable in capitalistic countries.

The divergence in the data obtained by Prasolov and that of proponents of neo-Malthusian is even more evident in the case of lands which are farmed on a small-scale basis. According to Prasolov, lands being used for this type of farming include about 7 billion hectares, while land used for average type of farming varies from 2 to 12-13 percent of the total, depending on the country.

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In countries having large populations (India, China; and parts of Europe) the use of lands for small-scale farming averages 50 percent, whereas in large capitalistic countries the utilization of such lands is 12 percent. In the various colonial countries the utilization of land drops to a low of 2 percent.

The soil maps which were compiled by Academician L. I. Prasolov for various oblasts of the USSR are of agricultural importance. They serve as necessary scientific material for putting an effective field protective planting and crop-rotation system into practice.

Just prior to the end of the session, Ye. V. Lobova read an account of Prasolov's meeting with V. V. Dokuchayev, N. M. Sibirtsev, and V. R. Vil'yams; also various congratulatory messages which were sent by the Presidium, departments, institutes, and laboratories of the Academy of Sciences USSR, the Ministry of Agriculture USSR, the Agricultural Academy imeni K. A. Timiryazev, the chairs of soil study of various higher educational institutions, other soil scientists, friends, students of L. I. Prasolov.

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